1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

861 The complete *gotul* organization is a feature of Muria and not of Hill Maria culture. But as it has extended to Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of Tapalibhum and Behra Mar) among the Hill Marias, a brief account of its salient features will not be out of place; it may be expected to spread into the hills with the gradual improvement of communications. A fairly full account from my notes on the Murias has been printed in the *Census of India* 1931 *Report*, Vol. I, Part III B., pp. 81-3. It may be added that it is easier for the Marias of Padalbhum to copy their Muria neighbours because Padalibhum not only has two or three villages which are not Padali villages but belong to the Nuroti and Usendi clans, but even in Padali villages has settlers of these two clans, which are *akomama* (wife-clan) to them.

[858] Boys and girls of an age to visit the *gotul* dormitories are known as *leyur* and *leyas* respectively. All the boys assemble at the 857 dormitory in the evening for dancing, games and social and sexual 571 training, sleeping on there after the departure of the girls to their homes late in the night. The girls attend at the dormitory in the 864 evening, each girl being paired off with a boy of an *akomama* clan. The girls have to comb their boys' hair and massage their arms and legs, to dance with them, and to be initiated into the mysteries of sex with them. Marriage frequently follows these dormitory unions, but by no means always does. Children are expected to attend the dormitory from the age of eleven or twelve, and the parents may be fined for not sending them. Every boy and girl has a special dormitory name or rank; the smaller children have designations which are little more than names, but those of the elder boys change as they are promoted, and involve special duties. The Hill Marias seem to have adopted the ranks for the boys only, the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory. In Padalibhum the head boy of the dormitory is always known as [177] the *leyur-gaita*, and below him the *gotul* officials are the *leyur-majhi*, the *silledar*, the *jaliarsi*, the *laharu*, the *baiddar* and the *kamdar*; of these, *silledar*, *baiddar* and *kamdar* are Hindi terms copied from the titles of State or zamindari servants; in many a Muria dormitory all the office-holders have such designations instead of the old native names. Besides these names or designations to which [551] special duties and privileges are attached, they have for the boys the names Jalka, Jolsai and Joria, and probably others. The girls' dormitory names ascertained were Jaliaru, Lahari, Manjaro, Nirosa, Jhelo, Gujaro, Piyosa and Belosa. At a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *leyur-gaita* of three

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Bison Horn Maria

village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Their dormitory mates were respectively Lahari, a Nuroti girl, Jaliaru, an Usendi girl, and Nirosa, a Nuroti girl; and despite their different designations, these girls were the head-girls of their villages in virtue of their boys' ranks. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhelo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls.

The dormitory in these *parganas*, as among the neighbouring Murias, is really a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan; the dormitory office-bearers are practically prefects and monitors. The headman and other elders of the villages frequently call on the head-boy for the help of his boys and girls in field-work; but here they are not paid wages, as among the Murias, but are only fed by those for whom they are working. They are also asked to help in thatching houses and building granaries. In weddings the girls are expected to sing, and boys to collect fuel and leaves for cups, and both have to dance; they have similar functions at the various new-eating festivals. The head-boy imposes fines for unjustifiable absence from the dormitory, or from weddings and festivals, or general disobedience of his orders or those of other office-bearers, a bottle of *mahua* spirit being the usual penalty, the cost of which falls upon the parents. The head-boy's mate has similar powers of fining other girls. At the nightly meetings of boys and girls at the dormitory there are dancing in season, tale-telling, singing and games, and from an early age boys are given practical lessons in sexual intercourse.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The information which I was able to collect on this subject among the Bison-horn Marias is much less full than that given above for the Hill Marias, and needs further testing and considerable supplementing.

During pregnancy the mother carries on her ordinary work. The only note which I have of any disability attaching to pregnancy is that when the flesh of animals slain in the *weta* ceremonial hunts is divided up and eaten, no share may be given to the husband of a wife who either is pregnant or has her monthly period. In most Bison-horn villages there is no menstruation hut, and in their houses there is no menstruation room. A few villages near the foot of the Abujhmar hills have a hut where young girls are

[see cat. 116, pp. 425-426. - AW1951]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

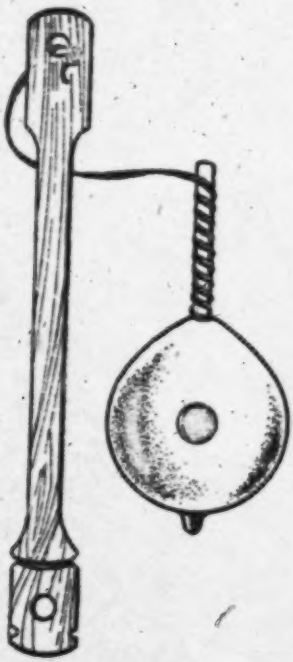

Fig. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8¼"

It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable